



*Thompson's
Lane 1930s*

242.93

c.44.6 : Thompson's Lane

1897 08 04

An extraordinary general meeting of the Cambridge Electric Supply co. Ltd was held at the Company's offices, Thompson's Lane, Cambridge. The chairman reported that their first capital had been £40,000 which had been spent on plant and the necessary things to equip the station. They had gone over that and had borrowed £2,250 from the bank. The business of the company was increasing and the capital must be increased too. Now was the time for shareholders to reap the reward of their enterprise if the use of electric light became universal in Cambridge

1900

1902 02 12

Cambridge Electric Supply Company reported that they would probably outgrow the present site, in Thompson's Lane. They had secured a site at Chesterton, situated at the side of the railway line so they would be able to bring coals into the yard and they had also arranged for the use of the river and the road. The site would not be required yet but as no other spot on the river was so placed they were justified in buying the land.

1910

1913 05 30

A blaze broke out at Messrs Macintosh's foundry in Thompson's Lane. After the day's work is done the men draw the furnace to allow the fire to die out. When this is done huge sparks fly up, giving the impression that the place is on fire. But one of these sparks was blown on to the roof and set light to a beam. Had it been left the entire premises would have burnt down. But firemen, aided by undergraduates, put it out. 13 05 30 p11

1913 07 11

Renaming of streets, Thompson's Lane

1914 08 21

Thompson's Lane fire, St Clements Gardens 14 08 21 p3

1920

1923 08 28 c

A huge boiler, mounted on a trolley, and towed by two heavy traction engines, sank into the roadway at the corner of Thompson's Lane, Cambridge, at about a quarter to twelve this morning. It appears that the boiler was being conveyed to the Electric Light Company's works in Richmond Terrace, when the road collapsed under the strain. The boiler is about 30 tons in weight, and was many feet in length, and it is estimated that together the boiler and trolley weigh 40 tons. After several hours work the boiler was extricated.

1924 10 30

Princess Mary visits Tapestry works, Thompson's Lane p6

1930

1932 05 16

Flames reached the roof of King and Harper's garage in Jesus Lane when a taxi-cab caught fire as it was being filled with petrol. Cars in the garage were pushed out and the blaze extinguished. The cab was taken to the Thompson's Lane depot but some part of it still smouldered for at four in the morning it again blazed up. This time it was totally destroyed. 32 05 16

1933 05 19

Sir – the gravel footpath from Brooklands Avenue along Hobson's River up Empty Common has long been known as Finch's Walk. But how did it get its name? Some people call it Senior Wranglers' Walk and connect it with the name of the Rev G.B. Finch who was Senior Wrangler in 1857. But he never mentioned that he had anything to do with it. In an 1834 deed relating to the Hobson's Conduit Trust there is mention of two trustees called Charles Finch, one of whom died in 1762, who had a foundry and ironworks in Thompson's Lane – W.D. Bushell. 33 05 19b

1934 01 08

Thousands of people lined both side of St Andrew's Street when the Queen and Duchess of York paid a private visit to Mr Woolston's antique shop where the Queen chose several tiny ivory objects for her famous doll's house. She also inspected the Cambridge Tapestry Company's premises in Thompson's Lane where they watched the women workers actually engaged at the canvas and saw the tapestry panelling now being made for Lord Fairhaven, depicting his seat at Anglesey Abbey. 34 01 08

1936 01 15

The Queen motored over from Sandringham to visit Mr Stanley Woolston's antique store where she purchased specimens of needlework and some ivories to add to her collection. As word spread the police had a hard time keeping back the ever-increasing throng of sightseers. It was noticed that one of the tyres of the royal car was a little deflated and an RAC Scout was called in to blow it up again. The Queen also visited the Cambridge Tapestry Company in Thompson's Lane where she saw one piece of tapestry that was being repaired. It had been stolen by thieves who were forced to abandon it

in a wood where it had been affected by the weather and some children had also mutilated it 36 01 15a

1936 07 28

A tapestry showing a panoramic view of Windsor Castle that was produced as a personal Silver Jubilee gift for the late King George V and Queen Mary is now on view in London. It represents the very finest modern English weaving and was designed and woven by the Cambridge Tapestry Company in their workshops at Thompson's Lane. The weavers were Ellen Nichols, Sylvia Corby, Ethel Lander, Dorothy Pettit, Elsie Blunt and Alice Haylett working under the direction of Hilda Lister. 36 07 28a

1937 05 10

Remarkably fine silken embroideries have been prepared for the embellishment of the thrones to be used at the Coronation of their Majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. The King's throne is adorned with the Royal Arms while the Queen's also carried her newly-granted Bowes Lyon arms. The Cambridge Tapestry Company was entrusted with the work of embroidering the backs of the thrones. All the preliminary drawings on linen were made in Cambridge and the work was completed at the company's premises at Ickleford, near Hitchin 37 05 10

1937 10 22

The Cambridge Hebrew Congregation's new synagogue in Thompson's Lane was consecrated by the Very Rev, the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire. Jews were to be found in Cambridge before the Middle Ages and the stone walls of the medieval synagogue were said to be still standing. Cambridge University was the first seat of higher learning in the modern world to have given Jewish studies academic recognition. Arthur Cohen was the first Jew to take up residence at Magdalene College in the early 1850s after representation had been made to the Prince Consort, the then Chancellor, by Sir Moses Montefiore. 37 10 22

1938 07 18

The Spanish people were fighting our battle & the British Government should take strong measures, a Conference on Spain in the Cambridge Masonic Hall was told. If Franco were to win as the pawn of Mussolini and Hitler another European war would be much closer. Meanwhile a service of prayer on behalf of religious persecution in Germany was held at the Synagogue in Thompson's Lane. Cambridge Refugee Committee exists to help all German and Austrian refugees and would be pleased to receive gifts of money 38 07 18 & a

1940

1948 07 15

The River Cam Conservators considered a request from the Eastern Electricity Board to run cables under the river from Magdalene College to Thompson's Lane. The Board propose to cover the cables with bags of cement in order to protect them from punt poles. Mr Burrows informed the meeting that dredging of the river was proceeding most satisfactorily. Following the meeting the Conservators set off for Bottisham Locks on board the "Viscountess Bury", but had barely left Jesus Lock when it became stuck in a sandbank

1949 10 24

Myers Memorial Hall, Thompson's Lane, Cambridge, was the home of the Cambridge National Spiritualist church was opened. The Hall, brightly decorated, lighted, furnished & heated, bears little resemblance to the army hut it once was. The organ was dedicated to the memory of the late Mr C.W. Brown, a former member and benefactor of the church.

1950

1956 10 22

A new library in memory of Herbert Martin Loewe, Honorary Fellow of Queens' College and a Reader in Rabbinics was opened in the Cambridge Synagogue, Thompson's Lane. He had worked hard for the many displaced refugees fleeing from Nazi armies and kept open house for students. The family had been honoured for their scholarship and respected for their public works and the library was a happy choice to commemorate his life. 56 10 22

1957 11 02

Thompson's Lane, p7

1959 05 06

The Eastern Electricity Board has introduced five Auto-Call Alarms in the fens area. Should the electricity supply be lost the small transistorised machine rings up control at Thompson's Lane and with the aid of a pre-recorded voice tells the engineer that a fault has developed. If the number is engaged the machine waits four minutes, then tries again. The whole operation is repeated four times. It is a triumph for the Board's 'boffins'. 59 05 06a

1960's The Cambridgeshire Collection has cuttings files from this date

1960

1960 09 01

Bill Walton joined the staff of King and Harper at their Thompson's Lane garage in 1910. In his early days he was concerned with the extremely temperamental racing car 'Chitty-Bang-Bang II'. This powerful monster consisted mainly of an ex-Zeppelin airship engine mounted on a Mercedes chassis. Another of his charges was a 'Prince Henry' Metallurique which in 1912 was the fastest car ever seen in Cambridge. He once went to a customer's house to collect a car only to find it could only be moved in reverse. He drove it backwards to the Bridge Street garage through Saturday afternoon traffic.

60 09 01

1962 08 16

The Cam Foundry in Thompson's Lane once had 20 men making cast iron, lamp posts, grating and road ironworks. Friday was the usual day for mould filling. The fire could be kindled in the cupola early in the morning and loaded up with hard furnace coke. The furnaceman was a real 'character'. A labourer, tough and very strong he would swing a 32 lb hammer to break up the scrap and pig iron. He distained the use of gloves or goggles, his bare hands and unprotected eyes in constant danger from molten splashes and sparks. It closed in 1923 and Messrs Macintosh transferred the business to the old Romsey Town cement works at Mill Road 62 08 16a & b

1964 01 30

Down Your Street article by Erica Dimock on Thompson's Lane – 64 01 30

1964 11 13

Eastern Electricity's new Fens Sub-Area control room knocks spots off the old system used at Thompson's Lane. A huge panel displays the entire electrical network while control desks have radio communications and lists of emergency engineering staff who can be called out. There is a standby generator which starts automatically should the main power fail. All this is the work of Pye Ltd. There is not a second when it is left empty. But it is unlikely that full-scale automation will ever be introduced. 64 11 13

1970

1972 04 10

The last pint was pulled in the "George and Dragon" in Thompson's Lane, Cambridge, last night. The pub, on the corner of Jesus Green by the river is to come down to make way for a modern pub-restaurant. Although the pub, more than 100 years old and owned by St John's College was a Tolly

House its successor, to be called The Dragonfly, will be a joint venture. Undergraduates and many University organisations have used the George and Dragon, once known as the Spade and Becket. The outgoing hosts, Jack and Wynn Asplin, take over the Great Northern Hotel by the Station Road roundabout, p10

1980

1985 09 11

A massive £2 million shops, offices and leisure complex has been thrown out by Cambridge planners – by just one vote. Magdalene College wanted to develop the riverside area of Quayside, Bridge Street and Thompson's Lane with a three-storey building and a development that would include shops, offices, restaurant, café, residential accommodation and a research and development base. Café tables would have spilled out into a square fronting the river. But residents objected, fearing extra traffic and councillors thought it too 'heavily massed' 85 09 11

1988 08 23

New laws to allow pubs to open from 11am to 11pm on weekdays and until 3pm on Sundays have had little impact in Cambridge. At the Baron of Beef in Bridge Street they still close mid-afternoon: with tourist coaches gone and people at work there is little going on until 5.30. But the revamped Spade and Beckett in Thompson's Lane & the Fort St George are opening all day while the Clarendon Arms are serving up afternoon cuppas & cakes. 88 08 23

1989 08 22

Business is booming in some local pubs. The Volunteer in Trumpington has seen a 20 per cent increase in turnover since all-day opening was introduced a year ago. They get a lot of business people in for long lunches and often folk call in on their way from work. Tourists also take advantage of the afternoon opening. The White Hart at St Ives also reports many businessmen drinking in the afternoon. The Spade and Becket, Thompson's Lane says they may follow suit as people are queuing outside the doors from five o'clock. 89 08 22

